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PORTUGAL: THE COUNTRY AND THE PEOPLE

By WILLIAM THOMPSON

Portugal, "Mother of Navigators," a land glorified by nature as have been few countries of the world, is one of the least known countries of Europe; yet it is a country of many attractions both for the scientific traveler and the layman. For the archeologist, for instance, the buried Roman and Celt-Iberian cities, treasure houses of antiquity, are rich mines for conquest with pick and shovel, awaiting exploration. Nor are there less resources awaiting the too infrequent tourist seeking health or pleasure. "If a large number of English, French, and German works on the health resorts of Europe or of the world, published during the last fifty years, be consulted, it will be seen at once how, if Madeira be excluded, almost all of them make no mention of any resort in Portugal," says Dr. Dalgado in the preface to his useful work on the climate of Portugal.¹

Portugal deepens one's love of nature, for she is vigorous here. Rose and lily, almond and camellia grow in lush profusion. Here, in a land of almost eternal sunshine, amid gardens of laurel and acacia, gray castles and white challenge the passerby. Fountains throw white mists from terrace and grotto; ferns and palms bow to distant slopes whose yield inebriates the bibber in far-distant lands. Long-horned beasts plod with their casked burdens down gentle roadways and along the hilly ranges by the banks of the Douro, far-famed in story and song.

Nor has justice been done to the country's people: we have been too apt to think of the Portuguese as "a political schemer, with a pistol in one pocket and a bomb in another." When I embarked at Amsterdam *en route* to Lisbon, I had grave doubts as to my safety, personal as well as material, considering a visit to this young republic as a precarious adventure rather than an outing, and as not unmixed with possibilities of revolution, bandits, and uncomfortable hotel service; but to my surprise, I found all classes of people the most lovable and trustworthy of the Latin races. Revolutions were incubated in the sanctums of the foreign press correspondents, and bandits were unknown.

The Country

PRODUCTIONS

Portugal is primarily an agricultural country. According to figures for 1912² 78.5 per cent of the surface is productive. Of this 33.4 per cent is under the plough, 11.1 per cent under arborescent cultivation (tree and

¹ D. G. Dalgado: *The Climate of Portugal and Notes on Its Health Resorts*, Lisbon, 1914; reference on p. ix.

² *Annuaire International de Statistique Agricole*, 1913 et 1914, Rome, pp. 13-15.

shrub crops), 28 per cent is forest and woodland, 27.5 per cent is pasture. The proportion of arborescent cultivation is much higher than in any other European country. The crop tree that gives rise to Portugal's most distinctive industry is the cork oak.³ Cork, raw and manufactured, stands second in the list of Portugal's exports.

First in value comes wine. The climate is particularly adapted to the culture of the grape, being humid and very warm. It has a variation of but twenty degrees in winter and summer in the vicinity of Oporto and Lisbon. The rainfall has been as high as 192 inches in twelve months, but it is equally distributed during the year and does not come in torrents.

THE WINE INDUSTRY

The wine industry dates from 1703. Port wine is the product of a certain demarcated district within sixty miles of Oporto, which in 997 was won back by Bermudo II, King of Galicia, from the Mohammedans. No wine produced outside this district can be sold or exported as port wine.

The vines are grown on the slopes of the mountains within this region and are planted on terraces the soil of which is supported by stone walls. Properties devoted to the wine industry (*quintas*) are located at Pinhão, Tua, and Senhora da Ribeira near Vesuvio.

The grape is gathered usually at the end of September or the beginning of October, according to the state of maturity. The bunches are cut from the vine by women and, after all the unsound grapes are removed, are placed in large tin-lined baskets to be carried on the backs of men to the *lagars*. Once the *lagar* is full the process of wine making is begun, the wine being allowed to ferment until the right degree of sweetness is obtained; after which it is drawn off in large vats, and then additions of wine brandy are made in order to stop further fermentation and so retain the required degree of sweetness. The wine is then left until the cold weather has made it "fall bright," before being sent to the lodges or wine stores at Oporto. There it is emptied into a large tank, from which it is pumped into oak vats to be left to mature.

These vats hold sometimes as much as 244 pipes, equal to 1,500,000 dock glasses. Great care must be exercised that every container is clean. Various yields are blended only after exhaustive tastings. In years when the wine is of exceptional quality the product is kept separate and is shipped as "vintage." There have been since 1908 but two "vintages" which merited the distinction of remarkable flavor and bouquet and possessed good keeping qualities.

The wood used for casks is the finest Russian oak, which, after being stored for a sufficient time to get rid of its greenness, is taken to the wood-cutting house where it is sawed and planed into variously shaped staves as required.

³ See J. Russell Smith: *The Oak Tree and Man's Environment*, *Geogr. Rev.*, Vol. 1, 1916, pp. 3-19.



FIG. 1.



FIG. 2.

FIG. 1—Port wine *quinta*, River Douro. The oxcart, like many other agricultural appliances in Portugal, is practically identical with the old Roman form.

FIG. 2—Terraces for vine cultivation at Pinhão on the Douro River.

THE ROADS

Agriculture and other industries, especially in the more remote districts, are handicapped by the lack of good transportation either by rail or highway. Bell,⁴ quoting another writer, gives a vivid picture of the roadways: "The state of the roads with ruts and holes in which carts sink has in certain parts given rise to a curious industry—that of rescuing vehicles which have stuck fast. It is exercised by peasants possessing yokes of oxen, who at sunrise, armed with hooks and ropes, lead them to the worst places and then wait patiently for the motor car or other vehicle to sink, and then immediately offer their assistance in return for a few shillings or pence,



FIG. 3—On the road from Portimão to Monchique, province of Algarve. Wagons carrying cork bark. Compare the pictures of cork oaks illustrating the article "The Oak Tree and Man's Environment" by J. Russell Smith, *Geogr. Rev.*, Vol. 1, 1916.

according to the quality of the vehicle and its occupants' Were a first-rate road to prolong to the Portuguese frontier the road of 500 miles from Paris to the Bidassoa, and could the roads in Portugal be compared with those of the Basque provinces (both in France and in Spain), a country so beautiful and with so many famous buildings would be overrun with motor cars."

Much of the commercial transport of Portugal is by way of the rivers Tagus, Douro, and Guadiana, all having their sources in Spain, and is consequently slow and irregular.

THE POPULATION

With an area of 35,500 square miles the republic had, at the census of 1911, a population of a little under 6,000,000. The density of 153 per square mile compares very favorably with that of Spain, about 100 to the square mile. In the north, where the individual holdings are small, the population is densest; in the district of Porto a maximum of 670 per

⁴ A. F. G. Bell: *Portugal of the Portuguese*. New York. 1915: reference on p. 34.

square mile is reached. In the south, in the province of Alemtejo, the density sinks to 45; here the holdings are much greater. During the Roman domination great areas of wheat were cultivated in this section; but today there are vast stretches of waste land, and grain must be imported. In 1913, wheat imported from the United States was valued at over \$2,300,000.

In fifty years the population has increased nearly $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. The foreign element has diminished slightly of late, but the chief factor retarding the rate of increase is emigration. Laborers receive a low rate of wages, only 20 to 25 cents a day. The average annual emigration for the years



FIG. 4—Fishing smacks, Lisbon. Sardines form one of Portugal's chief exports: a good deal of the product, however, goes out under the imprint of French packers.

1908-10 was not far short of 40,000, but in 1912 it increased alarmingly. For the whole of Portugal, including colonies but not including clandestine emigration (estimated at 25,000), the official figure is 88,929, of which 77 per cent was from northern Portugal. Most of this emigration is directed toward Brazil, the official figures for that country registering the entry of 76,530 Portuguese in 1912. The disparity between sexes is, then, not surprising; there are now 1,100 women to 1,000 men, the excess of women being larger than that of any other country of Europe. The proportion of aged people is very considerable. Bell's computation⁵ gives 52,783, or nearly 1 per cent of the entire population, as being over 80 years of age. Although sanitary conditions are very bad, vigor of stock and healthfulness of climate make the people's longevity compare most favorably with that of other countries.

ETHNOLOGY

Ethnologically, Portugal is a conglomerate. The people of the northern provinces of Entre Douro and Minho and Tras-os-Montes are of Galician

⁵ A. F. G. Bell: *op. cit.*, p. 26.

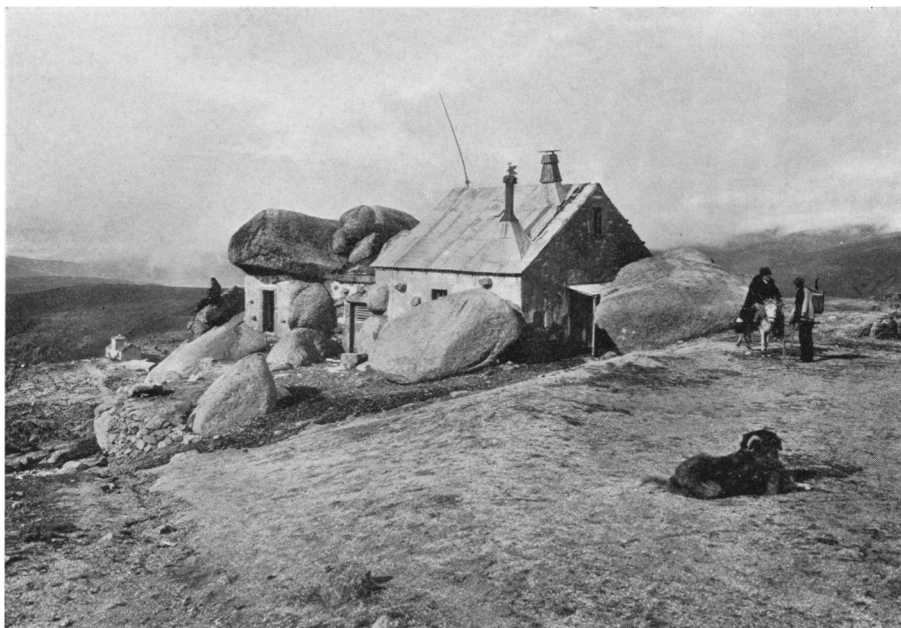


FIG. 5.



FIG. 6.

FIG. 5 House of boulders in the Serra da Estrella. The Serra da Estrella is the loftiest range in Portugal (over 6,500 feet). Physically, climatically, and ethnically it forms an important divide between north and south.

FIG. 6—Peasant group in the Serra da Estrella. Sheep and goats are among the chief resources of the mountaineers: from the milk of the latter an excellent cheese is made.

stock. South of the ethnic divide of the Serra da Estrella the population shows marked Arab, Berber, and negro strains. On the southern coast, from Cape St. Vincent to the Spanish frontier, African strain of blood is very apparent—due to the importation of slaves for service in the olive groves and vineyards of Alemtejo and the Algarves. These Portuguese of the lower provinces have also intermarried to some extent with Dutch, French, and English; and in one province with the Frisians. The Jews, after their forced conversion by King Emanuel, intermarried with all races.

ART

Portugal has a distinct national personality in art, music, and literature—each having a unique vigor. It has been said that all Portuguese are singers. On fête days and Sundays the roads abound with gayly costumed peasants carrying mandolas and singing the songs of Portugal, inspired by Camoëns, whose poems have enriched its literature.

In art and architecture famous names are Carlos Reis, Santos Braga, Texeira Lopez, Colombano, Adelaide Lima, Malho, Salgade, and Fernandez. The cathedrals, veritable monuments to the architectural genius of successive generations, vie with the noblest examples of ecclesiastical edifices in Europe. The sandstone so abundant in Portugal lends itself, when quarried, to the sculptor's chisel; nature's chemistry hardens it after the artist has completed his task.

The Cities and Their Historical Associations

In this country, historically so interesting, every city has its tradition with great names of the past.

SOME NORTHERN CITIES

Citania, the Pompeii of Lusitania, holds rare gems for the excavator wishing to learn the secrets of the Celt-Iberian period. Braga is an inspiration to those who are interested in the Arabic occupation of that picturesque town, where, it is believed, St. James laid the foundation stone of the Cathedral. Its walls hold a clock flaunting this egotistic inscription: "Master of the madrigal, I was made in the year one thousand of our Lord."

Vianna do Castello boasts the most valued titles of Europe, and buried behind the town on the hill are the ruins of Britonia, dating from the time of Catania.

At Vizeu the Lusitanian chief Vивиато contested with the Romans; and from Aveiro a large fleet sailed for Newfoundland shortly after its discovery.

BUSSACO

Bussaco, "the sacred," sheltered by the mountains of the same name, has known the Roman, Goth, Moor, Pagan, and Christian. In 1094 the

forest and monastery were ceded to the Bishop of Coimbra and have been the shrine of nature lovers for centuries. Here are growing within a walled area of six miles in circumference three thousand specimens of the aristocracy of the botanical world, many of which have been donated by the elect of the Church in the near and remote parts of the earth.

It was here that Wellington saw the defeat of Masséna's forces, and from the monastery of the Carmelites came the holy fathers to nurse the wounded and bury the dead.

Coimbra, the foster mother of the early Castilian and Portuguese kings, and the Cambridge of Portugal, skirts the lazy and poetized waters of the Mondego River. The University, now the only one in Portugal, succeeded to the charter given at Lisbon by Dinaz in 1290. Efforts have been made to remove the departments of law and medicine to Lisbon, but without success.

SOME SOUTHERN CITIES

Byron went to Cintra to write part of "*Childe Harold*" and found it "the most blessed spot on the habitable globe." Southey thought it "the most delightful village in Europe." Wellington, after the battle of Bussaco, lingered at this holy shrine and, upon departing, said to an old monk who had served him, "I am turning my back on paradise."

LISBON

Tradition holds that Ulysses founded a settlement on the Tagus near Lisbon. The works of Pliny and Ptolemy give distinction to Roman villages near the mouth of the same river. In Lisbon the daughter of a captain in the service of Prince Henry the Navigator married Columbus. The author of "*Don Quixote*" loved the Portuguese—a rare feeling in a Spaniard—and it was in Lisbon that a noblewoman bore him a daughter devoted to him until his death.

Alfonso Henriques, as a memorial of his victory at Santarem, erected one of the most gigantic monastic piles ever dedicated to a saint.

The chapel of the Graça church of Santarem holds the remains of the navigator Cabral, discoverer of Brazil. Believing he had sailed to the other side of the earth, he so announced on his return, but the falsity of his claim was shown by Amerigo Vespucci.

Setubal, the Cetobriga of the Romans, stands, a sun-lit sentinel, at the gate of the River Sado. Pre-historic adventurers came to dig for the wealth of its hills and to capture the fish of its waters. Bold hills look toward the sea, and granite headlands challenge the lords of the gales to combat. Pliny and Ptolemy report the existence, beneath the sea and on the island facing the town, of ruins recording the domination of the Roman Empire; and today the débris and ruins of villas and wells are numerous as evidence of the Roman craftsman's labors.

Evora is set in the bosom of olive orchards, looking from its summit-perched site to vineyards rolling as far as vision can reach. Here the Romans built a heroic monument to the greatness of the empire—the temple of Diana. Within the town limits, and in a palace now standing, Vasco da Gama received from Manuel I, the patron of navigators, his commission to find the secrets of Eastern Empires.

THOMAR

Thomar, the site of which Gualdim Paes selected in 1160 as a palace and fortress for his Knights Templars, stands monarch over the happy valleys, vine and olive-clad. Here in dead centuries walked the metal-costumed knight who was master of the Moors in the mighty conflicts that helped Spain to gain the final mastery over them. Vieira Guimaraes, geographer and historian, has written of Thomar: "Each stone speaks of a lasting feat of navigation; each motif sings a national hymn; each ornamentation chants a Homeric triumph overseas. Here are the skeletons of Indian reefs, waves of the ocean, the well-cut besants of our knights, the bells of the mules, the chains of our barges, ropes tied to grommet and anchor, weeds and flora of discovered seas, rings of cork; the oak, with roots exposed, the figures on the prow and the swollen sails of the ships, the Buckle and Garter of Manuel, the Portuguese Arms, and the Cross, Emblem of Chevaliers. These stones reflect the glorious times when Portugal carried the torch of civilization within the wooden walls of ships."